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THE 100th EDITION OF SOCIALIST STUDIES

To reach the 100th edition of SOCIALIST STUDIES is a milestone of sorts although very little has changed in the world since the first edition was published in 1991. Capitalism still exists as a global system of class exploitation. Capitalism still causes war, death and destruction. Economic crises and depressions are a periodic feature of commodity production and exchange for profit. And the working class still gives its support to capitalism either through voting for political leaders, indifference or cynicism.

There is also unbelievable wealth existing side-by-side with utter and abject poverty – poverty compounded by civil war and conflict causing mass migration and a nationalist back-lash which divides the working class.

Over the past quarter of a century governments have imposed austerity measures on the poor and the vulnerable with aggressive benefit assessment interviews for those suffering from cerebral palsey and mulutiple screosis. At the same time the rich have become richer and richer. An Oxfam study of 2015 has shown that the richest 63 people in the world now control as much wealth as the poorest 50 per cent of humanity (about 3.5 billion people). And the richest 1 per cent control more wealth than the remaining 99 percent.

A real and rising fascism is growing again in Europe; in countries such as Hungary, France, Austria, Germany, and Holland as a reaction against migrants. The economic and political project of the EU has begun to unwind while open borders are replaced by barbed wire, armed guards and concentration camps. Tear gas is fired against desperate men, women and children at the borders of Greece and Macedonia. Migrants are drowned off the coast of Greece as they try to cross the Medeterranian sea in boats unsuitable for the voyage. Many are being forced back to Turkey to an unknown fate. And all the time migrants are attacked and vilified in the racist media; a constant diet of hate and fear.

Of course, in 1991 this was not the script the capitalist class and its politicians were reading from. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire, Western capitalism was everywhere triumphant. We had reached the end of history where there were no competing ideas to a market economic system of buying and selling. Infamously we were told by the likes of Thatcher, Blair and Cameron that there was no alternative to the profit system.

The Neo-Conservatives in the US talked of a New Order. The image of US capitalism was going to be imprinted on the world. Prime Minister Blair and President Clinton continued this political rhetoric. However, the capitalist utopia was short-lived; it could only have been reached over a sea of blood.

Then 9/11 occurred. The destruction of the twin towers in New York by terrorists, most of whom were from Saudi Arabia, set in train wars in the Middle. There was even a war on terror, as though you could ever declare war on an

abstract noun.

The war on terror did not prevent the terrorism escalating around the world. The US and its allies inflicted their own state terrorism on civilian populations including imprisonment and torture. We now had « *rendition programmes* ». We also had Abu Gharib. And the wars never stopped; Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria to name but a few. Many of the wars initiated by the Labour Government of the time.

Acts of terrorism are now also widespread across Europe. Recent atrocities in Paris and Brussels has left dozens dead and injured while terrorist attacks in Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Nigeria – often underreported - total death and injury in the thousands.

Western capitalist support for the Arab Spring achieved nothing as one country after another collapsed into civil war, and dictatorship. No more so than in Syria where over 200,000 have been killed in five years, with cities razed to the ground. Radical Islamists supported by outside countries battle against each other as well as against the Assad regime, backed by Russia and Iran.

The problems associated with Israel and the Palestinians has continued unabated with Israeli military brutality being matched in equal ferocity by Hamas and other terrorist groups. An example of the twin poison of nationalism and religion.

Over the past 25 years China too has developed as a major political power to compete with the US. This has led to tensions in the South Indian Seas over disputed territories, access to ports, raw resources and strategic spheres of influence.

We should also remember the economic crises of 2008 which shattered the misguided belief that the market is rational, self-adjusting and beneficial to all. The economists were shown to be little better than astrologers. And their advice contributed to the destruction of political careers. Gordon Brown, the Labour Prime Minister, was told by economists that they had put in place theories and policies which meant continued and crisis free growth. There was to be no more *boom and bust*. The economists were wrong and so too was Mr Brown in believing their arrant economic nonsense.

And finally there is the political crisis of capitalism itself. This political crisis has not yet been translated into a growing socialist movement but it is there at the heart of capitalism. Capitalism is incapable of solving the problems of the working class. Social problems are becoming intractable. Social reforms can no longer patch up the problems workers face on a day-to-day basis. Capitalism is not the end of history. History still has to be made.

Of course capitalism can never meet the needs of all society. Capitalism causes problems of poverty, unemployment, poor health care, lack of housing and social alienation in the first place. All these above events have been covered by articles in SOCIALIST STUDIES.

Something should be said of the articles which have appeared in SOCIALIST STUDIES. Foremost they are written by members of our Party and our Party alone. And they are written within the framework of the OBJECT AND DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES of the Socialist Party of Great Britain to which we subscribe and defend.

Our articles have tried to deal with the substance of the socialist case against capitalism and are grounded in the three interrelated Marxian theories; the materialist conception of history, the labour theory of value and the political concept of the class struggle.

History has never stopped. The Soviet Union may have collapsed but socialism is still on the political agenda. Socialism has never been established for it to fail. There has never been the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution throughout the world.

Marx's theory of history was not refuted by the events of 1991. The working class still has a world to win.

Nor did class exploitation end. Throughout the world the working class remained exploited as Marx showed in

CAPITAL and his other writings. Social wealth derived from class exploitation. Workers produced what Marx called *surplus value* and this was the source of the unearned income going to the capitalist class in the form of rent, interest and industrial profit.

It was Tony Blair who said that capitalism was now free from class conflict and class struggle. “*The class war is over*“ he announced in a conference speech in 1996. And Lord Mandelson told journalists that New Labour was extremely relaxed with the rich, as Blair himself was to become with his property portfolios, donations from a grateful US political establishment and the lucrative fees from his advice to unsavoury regimes across the world.

The failure of New Labour has now given us Jeremy Corbyn and his back to the 1970’s politics of a welfare state from *the cradle to the grave*. The only grave that will be dug will be the one holding Corbyn’s failed leadership. Corbyn’s policies are only the rehashed policies of 1970’s Keynesianism, social reformism and nationalisation which defined the failure of previous Labour governments before Blair. Corbyn can offer the working class nothing new. He cannot offer them socialism. The Labour Party exists only to run capitalism not to establish a wageless, propertyless society of free men and women.

The class struggle is central to capitalism. The class struggle will always exist while there is working class forced to sell its ability to work on the labour market and a capitalist class owning the means of production and distribution to the exclusion of the rest of society. The class struggle takes place over the extent and intensity of class exploitation and politically over the ownership of the means to life (raw resources, factories, communication and transport). Capitalists have to exploit and workers have to resist that exploitation. Blair’s attempt at a partnership between the state, capital and trade unions failed as it had to fail in a system of class exploitation. And nowhere was this « *partnership* » so hollow » than when New Labour government used troops to break the Fireman’s strike and sanctioned the actions of the secret police through the Speacial Demonstration Group (SDG) to spy on trade union and political activists.

Politics, history and above all economics are the three important areas we have covered in detail. An understanding of where the working class has come from and where it should be going is an important and vital political consideration and informs our writing. This places the class struggle - *the motor force of history*- as the pivotal explanation of the world in which workers live and are exploited as a class.

The passing of 25 years has meant that many of the original contributors to SOCIALIST STUDIES are no longer alive; Hardy, Jim D’Arcy, Harry Baldwin and Harry Young to name but a few. Nevertheless the members who do remain active should be able to carry on writing articles for another 25 years. They will keep alive the OBJECT and DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES as a living set of socialist ideas rather than be considered as it was by those who derided North West London and Camden Bloomsbury Branches as “d of P’ers“ believing it to be a historical document to be either ignored wholly or partially as an embarasment or impediment in a desperate bid to get members.

However it would be a welcome thought that over the next twenty-five years the working class might at last begin to act as a “*class for itself*“. Rather than writing about the intractable problems created by capitalism it would be a welcome change to write about a vibrant and growing socialist movement throughout the world taking the necessary concious, political and democratic action to replace capitalism with socialism. We shall see.

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25 YEARS OF THE RECONSTITUTED SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN: WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Over the past 25 years what have we done? Well, for a start we have survived. We have continued to carry out

propaganda within the OBJECT AND DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES of the Socialist Party of Great Britain to which we subscribe. We have actually enjoyed ourselves. Free from the political spite of the Socialist Party we have published socialist literature, particularly SOCIALIST STUDIES which has concentrated on history, economics and politics. We have built-up a growing interest in our web site.

Will we be around in another 25 years? We hope not. Surely by then a conscious and political socialist movement will be pushing the class struggle to its final limit. Might not 2041 be a date within socialism not capitalism?

We too, have become part of history. So it is a timely reminder to republish the statement issued by the reconstituted Socialist Party of Great Britain on 11 June 1991.

THE RECONSTITUTED SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Socialist Party of Great Britain was reconstituted on 11th June 1991. All those who took part in the formation of the new party had been expelled from "*The Socialist Party*" on 7th May 1991 for what was described as "*undemocratic behaviour*". This consisted of continuing to hold propaganda lectures in the name of the Socialist Party of Great Britain when that name had been proscribed by the 1988 Annual Conference on the grounds that the name The Socialist Party of Great Britain was nationalistic. From then on all propaganda had to be in the name of "*The Socialist Party*".

We do not accept that the abbreviation of the Party's name was the real reason for our expulsion. The real reason is that a majority of the active membership do not agree with the Party case as expressed within the framework of the DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. They have ignored these principles and have also undermined the clear meaning expressed within them at successive Annual Conferences in recent years.

For example 1985 Annual Conference carried a resolution calling for the immediate abolition of the State: an anarchist proposition which contradicts the meaning of Clause 6 of the DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. This calls on the working class to organise consciously and politically in order that this machinery (including the armed forces) "*may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation...*". If the State is to be immediately abolished it would be impossible to establish Socialism.

Annual conference 1986 decided to change the Party's name officially to that of the Socialist Party. Henceforth it had two names, both official and unofficial. Annual Conference 1988 proscribed the use of "*The Socialist Party of Great Britain*" in propaganda spoken and written, press adverts, leaflets etc. This was a breach of Clause 8 which begins "*The Socialist Party of Great Britain therefore enters the field of political action...*" Members who stood by this principle and carried it into effect were expelled without charge or hearing for "*undemocratic behaviour*".

Annual Conference 1990 gave support to non-Socialist democratic reform movements in Eastern Europe which were seeking to replace state capitalist governments with democratic capitalist governments. In October/November 1990 the Executive Committee threatened to charge North West London and Camden/Bloomsbury Branches unless they withdrew a leaflet which contained the statement that the Party was opposed to democratic reform movements. In their letter the E.C. sent a copy of the 1990 Conference resolution. This was in breach of Clause 7, which states "*The party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party*".

Support for the Polish organisation "*Solidarity*" had previously been given in a leaflet published by the Pamphlets Committee, which was later reproduced in the SOCIALIST STANDARD of January 1982. "*Solidarity*" became the capitalist government in Poland in September 1989 and its main leader, Lech Walesa, became the President. Despite this the E. C. refused to repudiate this leaflet which gave support to Solidarity.

It became increasingly obvious that The Socialist Party was rapidly deteriorating into a mere anti-capitalist reform party. THE SOCIALIST STANDARD recently congratulated the university students demonstrating in Tiananmen Square on their courage in facing up to the armed forces of the State, when inevitably they were slaughtered.

THE SOCIALIST STANDARD generally is a pathetic imitation of the old SOCIALIST STANDARD. Most of its

articles are irrelevant to the real task of the socialist party which is to get the working class to understand socialism as a matter of urgency.

THE SOCIALIST STANDARD consists of rambling articles on every other subject except Socialism. It soft peddles on stressing the need for the working class to capture control of the political machinery. In addition it contains misleading information and makes absurd claims which cannot be substantiated. In no way could the SOCIALIST STANDARD be regarded as a fitting instrument for expressing socialist ideas.

The socialist society aimed at by socialists is briefly defined in the Party's OBJECT Now it has been defined as something else by Islington Branch, the largest branch in the Party. They speak of "*a truly democratic society*". Under this meaningless phrase the party has in recent years repeatedly given support to capitalist organisations on the ground that they were "*democratic*".

Islington Branch would like to remind comrades that the object of the Socialist Party is to overthrow capitalism and establish a truly democratic society. The blatantly undemocratic behaviour of some members and the resulting procedural wrangling and personal attacks on fellow members detracts from the revolutionary aim of our Party. This time wasting behaviour is an insult to the efforts of workers around the world who are still suffering and dying for the right to organise democratically"(E.C. Minutes 15th January 1991).

Had we not been expelled it would have been impossible for us to remain in this organisation. We have been forced into existence as were our predecessors in 1904. They were expelled from the Social democratic Party for holding propaganda meetings.

We have adopted the OBJECT and DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES of the 1904 Party as the basis for our propaganda, and we call on those who have any concern for the future of the Socialist Movement to join with us. The present "*Socialist Party*" has no future. It will become more and more reformist and opportunist as the restraints of genuine Socialists are removed. There can only be one Socialist party, and there can only be one objective, Socialism.

NATIONALITY: NATIONALISM AND NATIONS

The twin ideas, nationality as the basis of States and the independence of nations, are impossible of achievement in the world of capitalism. It is difficult to find any country in the world which is not a mixture of language and religious and cultural groups, and in most of them on or another of these minorities is persuaded to feel that they are oppressed. On the other hand, the idea of independence is a myth. The capitalist world has reached the stage in which, for economic and military reasons, small countries cannot hold their own, all are being driven into one or another of the big economic and military groups. The smaller countries that survive without formally belonging to a large group have only a nominal independence. They are tolerated because it suits the larger Powers and in all important questions they must frame their policies and adapt their industries and trade agreements to the needs of their more powerful neighbours. *The socialist Party and War*, p. 51, The Socialist Party of Great Britain, June 1950)

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WORLD SOCIALISM NOT NATIONALISM

Socialists at a global level are not interested in countries and nation states but in world socialism; a world without frontiers, barbed wire, concrete walls, search lights, border guards, passports, immigration camps, and nationalism.

We are not interested in a Palestinian homeland any more than we are interested in the state of Israel. We have no interest in international law, the rights and wrongs of the occupation, and the status of being an Israeli or Palestinian.

Yes we recognise the causes of the bitterness, the hate and loss of forced expulsion from homes and farms, the state terrorism and the military violence against men, women and children just as we condemn the reaction; the individual

terrorism; the indiscriminate rockets, suicide bombs and killing of civilians. The history of nation states is a history of land grabs, plunder, displacement, war and conflict. Socialists, though, do not take sides.

Instead we work from the position of class, class interest and class struggle not nations, national interest and national struggle. There is a working class in Israel with its own interest separate and distinct from those of the ruling or capitalist class there who own the means of production and distribution to the exclusion of the rest of society and who exploit workers on a daily basis. The same applies to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

No working class in any of the 196 odd countries of the world today own the means of production and distribution. The world's working class is a subject and exploited class but has a common interest in abolishing capitalism with its nation states, war and conflict. We want to actively see the development of socialists consciously and politically establishing world socialism instead of compliant "citizens"; the development of an open socialist outlook of revolutionary change rather than a closed nationalist darkness.

Consider this though experiment. Consider two socialists; a socialist in Israel who recognises that he has no interest in Israel, Israel nationalism its borders and its territories. Think of a socialist in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank who likewise recognises that she has no interest in a Palestinian state, a Palestinian struggle against Israel and a Palestinian nationalism. Both are socialists both have the same interest both want to see a world without nation states, war and conflict.

From the dirt under their feet are imaginary socialists who say that they can both live and work together to create a sane and rational world for human beings without an Israeli state, without a Palestinian state without nation states at all. One world, one human species and one aim to produce and distribute directly to meet human need.

Socialists do not question the desirability of people wanting to preserve patterns of life that suits them and the environment in which they live. Socialists do not want to impose uniformity. However, socialists have no truck with nationalist movements. Nationalist movements not only generate division and conflict within the working class but they are also an illusion and hide the interest of a would-be capitalist class.

The real issue for workers, no matter where they live in the world is class solidarity and the conscious and political establishment of World Socialism. The struggle is for the common ownership and democratic control of the Earth's resources for the use and benefit of everyone.

CAPITALISM FAILS THE WORKING CLASS

If you think that Labour has failed the working class, you are not alone in thinking this way. Yet we are told there is no alternative to capitalism; to the profit system. And with this it's never ending problems – the struggle by workers for reasonable wages and tolerable working conditions, the struggle against insecurity and poverty, the curse of wars and terrorism. But do you really believe there is an alternative to capitalism, only an occasional, limited, choice between alternating and very similar ruling parties?

The Socialist Party of Great Britain asks you to think for yourself, to reject political leaders who claim to act in your interests. The mainstream political parties, whose policies are practically identical, only offer you the usual Tweedledee and Tweedledum choice. This is no choice at all. They are parties which invariably fail the working class – for the simple reason that the function of governments is to defend the interests of the capitalist class.

Political leaders –whatever their parties – cannot solve the basic problems workers experience. The Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn is no different. The problems of poverty, unemployment and war can only be resolved by establishing a new social system based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. Production for use not for profit – that is socialism.

Capitalism means endless international economic competition. So long as the world is organised on a capitalist economic basis, economic rivalries will continue to produce wars and terrorism.

DOES CAPITALISM HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE FACE?

Does capitalism have an acceptable face? Socialists ask the question because MPs are currently calling the former BHS owner, Sir Philip Green the “*unacceptable face of capitalism*”. They want answers to his sharp business practices. They want to know about the £571 million hole in the BHS pension fund and they want to know why Green, his wife and others have all benefited financially from the car crash that is BHS.

Sir Philip Green received his knighthood in 2006 from Tony Blair’s Labour government; something about Labour at the time being at ease with the rich. And ”rich” Green certainly is, with a fortune estimated at around £3.22 billion (TIMES RICH LIST 2016). He also gives a lot of his money to David Cameron’s Tory Party while using exotic and creative tax management techniques to pay as little tax in Britain as possible. His wife, Tina, sits on most of his family’s off-shore wealth in Monaco.

Philip Green is also known to be a ruthless businessman, described by Robert Preston in his book “*Who runs Britain*” as “*The King of Jackpot Capitalism*”. And for investors Green certainly has hit the jackpot for them. Richard Caring, the restaurateur and clothing tycoon, received £93 million in payouts in the early days of Green’s ownership of BHS (GUARDIAN 29th April 2016).

So why has Sir Philip Green passed from being an “*acceptable*” capitalist feted by politicians from Blair to Cameron to becoming an “*unacceptable*” capitalist attacked in the media and Parliament? Why the pariah status?

A lot has to do with BHS going into administration, the fate of its 174 store, problems with its pension fund and the 11,000 employees who look like losing their jobs.

With the arrival of internet shopping the department store has become a thing of the past. Green knew this when he sold BHS for a pound in 2015 to a consortium called Retail Acquisitions Limited led by Dominic Chappell. Chappell is a “*less than credit-worthy*” and “*repeat bankrupt*” (PRIVATE EYE no. 1417 2016).

In the last few years Chappell and his associates have taken £15 million out of this loss-making company. In comparison the pension fund has a liability of only £570 million. Intense competition, use of cheap foreign labour to produce clothes and cut-throat discounts favour the lean and the mean high street operators. By comparison, BHS is a dinosaur.

On learning that he was to blame for the demise of BHS Sir Philip Green is reported to have said:

If I give you my plane, right, and you tell me you’re a great driver and you crash into the first fucking mountain, is that my fault? (GUARDIAN 19th March 2016)

Sir Philip Green has his admirers. Richard Godwin, writing in the EVENING STANDARD saw Green as the embodiment of modern capitalism with: Its cynicism, the avarice, the bullying and insecurity (EVENING STANDARD, 27th April 2016)

Godwin goes on to remark that Green:

...performs a service simply by showing us how it (capitalism) works.

But does Sir Philip Green really show how capitalism works. Superficially capitalists like Green are seen to undercut their competitors, make vast profits and amass as much capital as possible. If the business fails then creditors, workers and others are just “*collateral damage*” in a system where making a profit counts for everything.

Colourful characters like Sir Philip Green litter capitalism’s history. They are the stuff of novelists and satirists.

However being a ruthless bully, walking over competitors and treating workers like so-much disposable rubbish is in fact not how capitalism really works.

If you want a scientific account of how capitalism really works you will not find it in the Business Section of the EVENING STANDARD. In fact you will not find it in the economic text books taught at universities either. To discover how capitalism works you will first have to turn the pages of the works of Karl Marx or read other similar socialist literature which gives an understanding of how capitalism really works.

So, how does capitalism really work? For Marx, the worker sells their labour power or ability to work at its value. Workers sell their labour power as a commodity in exchange for a wage or salary. The capitalist now has control over the workers' labour power, say, for an eight hour day.

The workers, in the production process, have lost their freedom over their time and must work according to the dictates of the capitalist. The workers produce commodities using the means of production owned by the capitalist. What the workers produce as commodities is also owned by the capitalist.

Say it takes 5 hours for the workers to produce enough value to buy what they and their family need for a given day to produce and reproduce themselves as an exploited class. The workers still have to work for another three hours. The workers work a surplus time producing surplus value. The workers work for free for the capitalist.

And the commodities produced by the working class contain the profit released when they are sold on the market. Surplus value, then, is the source of profit; industrial profit to the capitalist, interest to the financier and rent to the landlord.

It does not matter whether the capitalist is an ascetic philanthropist or a ruthless chancer like Sir Philip Green. They both have to exploit the working class as ruthlessly as possible to remain capitalists. They have no choice in the matter although capitalism favours the entrepreneur who destroys his competitors without losing any sleep. "*Capitalism is not for wimps*" and "*Greed is good*" is the world Green inhabits.

An investor would rather have Sir Peter Green at the helm than Mother Theresa. For the investor, the Greens of the world, while they are making money for the shareholders, will always be the acceptable face of capitalism.

What is not acceptable is for the working class to go on year-in and year-out producing the surplus value and subsequent profit for Sir Peter Green and his class to live-off. The collapse of BHS shines a light on the grubby practices of those who have gained by its collapse. However, it does not show how profit is made any more than it explains capitalism and the workings of the profit system.

The question is not presenting an acceptable face of capitalism as though class exploitation can be reduced to a PR exercise but, instead, it is a question of class and class ownership of the means of production and distribution and what they are used for. The workers do not need the capitalist class, with an "*acceptable face*" or not.

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HELICOPTERS, KITCHEN SINKS AND CAPITALISM

In a frantic attempt to stimulate the economy the central bankers are running out of policy ideas. In the past they persuaded politicians that they had their fingers on the pulse of the economy and were able to force capitalists to invest and consumers to spend. "*No More Boom and Bust*" they told the former Labour Prime Minister, Mr Brown. He then told the electorate: "*No More Boom and Bust*". He was wrong. His advisors were wrong. The power the central bankers thought they had over the workings of the economy was just an illusion.

Capitalism just went its own old anarchic way and in 2008 the economy suffered another economic crisis, the repercussions of which are still being experienced today. And since the last economic crisis, the economy has performed badly despite falling unemployment and higher growth; an economy where so-called “zombie” businesses just struggle from one month to the next, where there is the persistence of huge private and government debt, poor productivity and under-investment in new technology.

Here is Meryn King, from his book “THE END OF ALCHEMY: MONEY, BANKING AND THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY”:

Central banks have thrown everything at their economies, and yet the results have been disappointing ... whatever can be said about the world recovery since the crisis, it has been neither strong, nor sustainable, nor balanced (THE OBSERVER, 13 March 2016)

Typically, the government blames negative economic forces abroad that it cannot control. In Shanghai, at the gloomy G20 meeting, George Osborne gave an interview with the BBC in which he acknowledged the problems of the world economy:

We’ve just had figures that show the economy is smaller than we thought in Britain, and we also know that global risks are growing and Britain is not immune to those things (INDEPENDENT 3rd March 2016)

The Chancellor, George Osborne, is now promising more austerity and further cuts.

The policy of zero interest rates has not worked and it has now led central bankers to consider a policy of negative interest rates in an attempt to stimulate the economy. The Swiss have already tried this policy, so have the Swedes and the European Central Bank, all without success.

It was obvious that these economic policies were going to fail. The central bankers only had to look at the Japanese economy where every known policy known to capitalist economic theory has been tried and failed. The Japanese economy has been in stagnation since the mid 1990’s, marked by weak economic activity, commodity and asset price deflation, banking failures, increased bankruptcies, and rising unemployment. Japan’s economy has suffered the most sustained economic downturn seen in the industrial world since the 1930s.

Fearing a Japanese “lost decade” the central bankers are now proposing what has been called “the helicopter money option”, first put forward by the late Milton Friedman in the 1960’s. Central bankers are now seriously considering the idea of injecting money into consumers’ accounts, mandating pay rises or giving deposits away for a house. According to Matthew Lyn of the DAILY TELEGRAPH “no one really expects these policies to be adopted or even work” (*Get Ready to be Showered by Helicopter Money*, 22nd February 2016). Clearly desperate economic policy-makers are forced to implement desperate policies.

Once it is clear that there are no more economic policy options open to them, all the central bankers will have left open to them is the proverbial kitchen sink to throw at the economy. This has been acknowledged by Andraes Whittam Smith in an article “We’re teetering on a brink of a recession, but there’s one lever left” (INDEPENDENT 3rd March 2016). He said

The most important reason for pessimism, however, is not mentioned in the statements by official bodies. Nor could it be, for it raises the issue of whether these organisations and their governments have the ability any longer to influence the course of events

Whittam Smith’s “lever” is in fact no lever at all. It is the nothing more than the jammed and rusted lever on which the decomposing hand of Keynes impotently rests. This Keynesian lever has been permanently stuck since 1973 when the policy of the government “managing” the economy to maintain “demand” failed as inflation grew simultaneously with unemployment. In 1976, the Callaghan Labour government went on, via an IMF loan, to embrace the equally the equally fallacious theory of Monetarism.

So why not abandon the use of any economic policy and just let the economy run its course? This is very unlikely to

happen. It will undermine the credibility of central bankers and politicians who are under the misguided belief that they run capitalism rather than the other way around.

For generations, politicians have told the working class that periodic economic crises and trade depressions can be resolved by the implementation of the right economic policy. So we have had Monetarism, policies around the raising or lowering of Interest rates, cuts in taxation, quantitative easing and proposals for more government spending.

No government could ever seriously contemplate telling a non-socialist electorate that the only option for bankruptcies and rising unemployment is to do absolutely nothing. No government could announce that workers would just have to put up with falling wages and salaries and long periods of high unemployment. And no government could say that the destruction of value, bankruptcies, defaults on debt and the stockpiling of commodities sets the ground for an eventual up-turn in the economy.

The government would be worried that other economic snake oil salesmen like themselves would step in and offer a “*solution*” to the problems of the profit system. “*Saviours of capitalism*”, these economists are called. The graveyard of capitalist economic theory is littered with their entombed bodies. As Marx, after a life time of studying capitalism, knew only too well, there is no solution to the trade cycle and its consequences; at least if you want to retain capitalism. And who in their right mind does?

Capitalists not Politicians know when to invest.

If there was a chance of investing “*idle*” capital and making a profit then there would be no cash mountain. It is in the nature of capitalists to invest and make a profit. As Marx noted:

As the conscious representative of this movement, the possessor of money becomes a capitalist. His person, or rather his pocket, is the point from which money starts and to which it returns. The expansion of value, which is the objective basis or the mainspring of the circulation M-C-M', becomes his subjective aim, and it is only so far as the appropriation of ever more and more wealth in the abstract becomes the sole motivator of his operation, that he functions as a capitalist, that is as capital personified and endowed with consciousness and will...the restless never-ending process of profit-making alone is what he aims at (CAPITAL Vol. 1 Chap. IV p. 130)

Capitalists do not need economists, government ministers and politicians telling them when to invest. Capitalists invest when they believe they are going to make a profit. And when they cannot invest for a profit, then business take advantage of stock-markets to buy back their own shares, or lend to banks and other businesses, or to buy a few paintings by Renaissance Masters to hang on the wall of the CEO's office – still a risk give the current poor performance of the global art market.

The problem of investment is even more acute for smaller businesses. Many cannot afford to borrow money on current lending terms. The problem they face is that they cannot find banks to lend them the money capital because of the unviable state of the company. Who wants to lend to companies who are likely to go bankrupt? The so-called “*zombie*” companies are barely able to stay afloat from one quarter to the next and are often weighed-down with debt and unable to expand. A period of higher interest rates would just kill them off, and the lenders know it.

So, investment will return only when capitalists believe they will get a return on their capital and not before. A lesson that economic policy-makers will have to learn once throwing the kitchen sink at the problem has failed. What about the working class? How do they fare in an economic depression? Not very well, as it happens. And it is not surprising; wage slavery is not only exploitative but leaves workers vulnerable, insecure and uncomfortable. And no more so than when made unemployed as workers are still experiencing today in the steel, oil and service sectors of the economy. But then what? If capitalism cannot be made to work in the interest of workers why don't workers pursue their own class interest? Why not begin to understand that the problems workers face as a class are caused by capitalism and realise that socialism is a practical and viable alternative to the profit system.

THOMAS MORE, UTOPIA AND SOCIALISM

2016 marks the 500th anniversary of the publication of Thomas More's UTOPIA (Penguin Classics, 1965 edition). UTOPIA was written in two sections. The first and most important section of the book gave an account of how the author came to hear of Utopia and is a largely a discussion on the causes of crime and punishment, the effects of enclosures and the increase in wool production. The second section of the book was a detailed description of life in Utopia. Utopia was an imaginary island supporting a perfectly organised and contented community of people and was intended to contrast with the conflict-ridden social and economic reality of Tudor England. In More's Utopia, for example, there is no private property, no rich and poor and no use of money except for trade with other countries.

Who, though, were More's audience? They were drawn from the affluent and educated European elite who were able to read Latin and understood the Greek puns and jokes which littered the book. UTOPIA did not address the population at large, most of whom were illiterate and lived in abject poverty, where poor harvests often meant starvation and death. More offered no political programme to either establish Utopia or identify a political agency to initiate social change. Utopia came ready-made. And Utopia had fixed social relationships; it was a society going nowhere. Technology and science had come to a dead-end; labour was primitive and hardly creative while the permanent state of perfection in agricultural production did away with the need for innovation and change.

The text was originally published in Latin which lent itself to many different readings. Ambiguity was a useful political device used by More to protect the author from charges of treason when advocating dangerous ideas and criticising politicians and the church.

A common claim among More's intellectual circle was that Utopia should be read as a satire, again protecting the author from charges of political sedition. Certainly this is how More's friend Erasmus suggested how the book should be read. In a letter to a friend he commented:

Some of the names [of places] used in Utopia are famously indicative of this [humour]...Utopia is a Greek neologism for 'nowhere', the principal city of the island is Amaurot, which means "foggy or phantom", the principal river...is the Anider, which is Greek for 'waterless,' and the man who tells the story of Utopia, Raphael Hythloday, [his surname] is probably best translated as 'peddler of nonsense' blog.acton.org/archives/31925-was-thomas-more-a-proto-communist.html

And according to David Leopold, in his introduction to William Morris's NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

More added a Latin ending (ia) to a combination of a Greek adverb for "not" (ou) and a noun for "place" (topas), thereby creating a word for "nowhere" which also suggested a "happy" or "fortunate" (eu) place (William Morris, NEWS FROM NOWHERE, Oxford World Classics 2009 p. xxiii)

So there are many different readings of UTOPIA. If you took UTOPIA at face value it was a harmless satire signifying nothing. If you were a magistrate, UTOPIA was just a bit of harmless intellectual fun, much in the same way that Marx's CAPITAL was treated as a dry-as-dust scientific text by the Tsar's censors. However, if you were looking for a critique of Tudor society, then Utopia was raising some important political questions which, despite being published abroad, could be discussed without the author fearing arrest, imprisonment and torture.

And one topic More discussed at length was the social consequence for the poor of the enclosures of the commons. The imposition of the enclosure of the commons for sheep-rearing raised the question of theft and punishment. The Tudor State and its legal system said that stealing was the fault of the individual and that society was not to blame. The Church, too, would also point to the "*flawed and sinful*" nature of men and women; the curse of Adam and Eve. Society was not held responsible for the actions of individuals. Poverty was no excuse for theft. The individual was to blame. We hear this simplistic conservatism from politicians today!

To argue against this commonly held conservative view of the individual and to offer an alternative explanation to the reason for theft was to go against the feudal order. But this is exactly what Thomas More did in UTOPIA. More,

for example highlighted the enclosure of common land for the grazing of sheep as a principle cause for theft. He was well placed to write on the economy and the way it affected peasant life: as a lawyer in fixing-up trade deals for the export of English wool and import of cloth to and from the continent. He had Raphael Hythloday, “*the peddler of nonsense*”, explain to the Cardinal that the cause of theft was sheep:

... These placid creatures, which used to require so little food, have now apparently developed a raging appetite, and turned into man-eaters. Fields, houses, towns, everything goes down their throats. To put it more plainly, in those part of the kingdom where the finest, and so the most expensive wool is produced, the nobles and gentlemen, not to mention several saintly abbots, have grown dissatisfied with the income that their predecessors got out of their estates. They're no longer content to lead lazy, comfortable lives, which do no good to society –they must actively do it harm, by enclosing all the land for pasture, and leaving none for cultivation... (p. 46-47)

What of Thomas More himself? Was he a “*proto-socialist/communist*” (both words meant exactly the same; the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society) as some have suggested? Karl Kautsky, for example, in his book THOMAS MORE AND HIS UTOPIA (1888), took the island of Utopia as a political mirror of what Tudor England would be like if established by an enlightened ruler:

The island of Utopia is, in fact, England. More designed to show how England would look, and what shape her relations with abroad would assume, if she were communistically organised
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1888/more/ch13.htm>

However, if you are an anti-communist you can take comfort from the fact that the Pope would not have canonised a radical and dangerous politician who appeared to inspire utopian socialism and the authors of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO. It should not be forgotten that Thomas More ordered the torture and burning of heretics.

More also argued against the Protestant Reformation, notably responding to Simon Fish’s pamphlet SUPPLICATION OF BEGGARS (Spring of May 1529) which had attacked the bloated greed and corruption of the English Catholic clergy. Some of the passages in Utopia acknowledged the truth of Fish’s attack against the Catholic Clergy, notably their wealth, privilege and power. And it should not be forgotten that the class struggle and politics took place through the language of religion much as it does today with Islam with a dependence on the Quran for authority and guidance. Despite the books shortcomings, Kautsky, unlike other commentators placed it within the Marxian class struggle, although, in the Introduction to his book, he over-eggs his argument by attempting to trace More’s socialist ideas back to Plato and Christ:

It is sometimes debated whether the honour of having inaugurated the history of Socialism should fall to More or to Münzer, both of whom follow the long line of Socialists, from Lycurgus and Pythagorus to Plato, the Gracchi, Catilina, Christ, His apostles and disciples, who are sometimes mentioned in proof of the assertion that there have always been Socialists without the goal ever coming nearer
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1888/more/ch13.htm>

Was Utopia a happy place? Its equality through uniformity leaves a lot to be desired, particularly as a template for a future socialist society. More’s model of Utopia seems to have derived from the communal life of the monastery. There was also a hierarchical system of government with no free movement or encouragement of independent thought except in the acceptance of a variety of religions and sects which would have been anathema for the Catholic Church which excommunicated and hunted down all heresies. Atheists were scorned by the public and were not permitted to hold any public office. When women committed some offence they were punished like children by their husbands. Once a month, all wives had to kneel down before their spouses and “*confess all their sins of omission and commission, and ask to be forgiven...*” (p. 126).

And there is the issue of slavery and war. For all Utopia’s supposed egalitarianism, the Island society had slaves, including prisoners of war captured in battle. Utopians also travelled to foreign countries to purchase and enslave criminals condemned to die. And Utopians who committed serious crimes were also held as slaves. Dissent in Utopia was not tolerated. There was no democracy. Given a choice, who would want to live there?

Nevertheless Thomas More put forward one of the first critiques of early capitalism showing that it was established

“under circumstances of ruthless terrorism” (Marx, *The Expropriation of the Agricultural Population*, CAPITAL, Vol. 1 p 895). More’s recommendations to the social problems of the society in which he lived are not those of a socialist but a socialist can at least acknowledge, as Marx did, someone who saw this terrorism at first hand and was disgusted by the consequences, where *“each greedy individual preys on his native land like a malignant growing, absorbing field after field, and enclosing thousands of acres with a single fence”* (p.47)

Thomas More and William Morris

Thomas More’s UTOPIA also had an influence on William Morris. More’s literary device of creating an utopian idyll in which to discuss and analyse social problems finds an echo in NEWS FROM NOWHERE (1890) – how is a socialist revolution to be achieved and by whom, why will people work without the economic compulsion of wages, how will they relate to each other, who will perform the unpleasant tasks and so on. These are real questions still asked of socialists today and in the setting of Nowhere, Morris tried to answer them as Thomas More did in his UTOPIA.

So, in NEWS FROM NOWHERE, Morris looks at the question of the division of labour under capitalism and how it would be resolved in socialism. The reader is introduced to a Yorkshire weaver who is also a mathematician, printer and an historian and a refuse collector who is also a novelist. Morris also illustrates how children will learn, how men and women will relate to each other and how a future socialist society would organise itself. Unlike employment in capitalism work is creative and a pleasure.

We are not committed to accepting Nowhere as a blueprint for Socialism any more than we are committed to accepting the social structure of Utopia but the questions being asked are interesting and require an answer.

Morris wrote an introduction to Ralph Robinson’s translation of Utopia, published in 1893 by the Kelmscott Press. Morris also illustrated the book and used references to aspects of life in Utopia in some of his lectures. Morris, though, saw Thomas More, as a writer who looked backwards in history rather than being of use to the socialist/communist politics of Morris’s own day. In his Introduction to Utopia Morris made this comment:

...yet it seems to me that its value as a book for the study of sociology is rather historic than prophetic, and that we Socialists should look upon it as a link between the surviving Communism of the Middle Ages (becomes hopeless in More’s time, and doomed to be soon wholly effaced by the advancing wave of Commercial Bureaucracy), and the hopeful and practical progressive movement of to-day. In fact I think More must be looked upon rather as the last of the old than the first of the new...

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1893/utopia.htm>

Thomas More’s Usefulness to Socialism

What of More’s usefulness to Socialism? Significantly, More saw early mercantile capitalism as:

...a conspiracy of the rich to advance their own interests under the pretext of organising society...for exploiting the poor by buying their labour as cheaply as possible...(T)hus an unscrupulous minority is led by its insatiable greed to monopolise what would have been enough to supply the needs of the whole population (p.130)

This quotation is an early statement of the characteristic of class exploitation of the capitalist system, only just emerging from Feudalism. Thomas More was ahead of his time in his critique of *“primitive capitalism”*, where he showed how the enclosures drove the peasants off the land creating a homeless, penniless and vulnerable population to be confronted by the exploitive wages system with all its insecurity and degradation. UTOPIA, then is a powerful denunciation of the rule of the rich and powerful when considering More’s own privileged position within Tudor society. It was Marx who was to show that what workers sold to the capitalists was *“labour-power”* and it was this peculiar commodity which was exploited in the labour process.

More was one of the very few non-socialist writers to have considered abolishing money within UTOPIA although it

did not apply to the buying of foreign slaves. Thomas More, like Shakespeare in his play, Timon of Athens, clearly understood the corrupting influence of money. On money Thomas More wrote:

...with the simultaneous abolition of money and the passion for money, how many other social problems have been solved, how many crimes eradicated! For obviously the end of money means the end of all those types of criminal behaviour which daily punishments are powerless to check: fraud, theft, burglary, brawls, riots, disputes, rebellion, murder, treason, and black magic. And the moment money goes, you can also say good-bye to fear, tension, anxiety, overwork, and sleepless nights. Why, even poverty itself, the one problem that has always seemed to need money for its solution, would promptly disappear if money ceased to exist (p. 130)

As a Catholic, More's criticism of money may have had more to do with his ascetic moral world-outlook rather than with an anticipation of a socialist society of free men and women in which there will be no money, buying and selling of commodities, and the exploitive wages system. After all, money, like sex had, long been accepted by Catholic doctrine as one of the causes of sin and moral pollution. More's own Bible would have told him that:

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.1 Timothy 6:10

More was wide awake to the social ills of his time, which he describes as a "social system". Although he links the wealth of the rich to their social power over the poor he could initiate no political programme or identify social agents which could establish another social system. What you can do and cannot do is limited by the time in which you find yourself. Even a minority of socialists are limited in the political action they take. Revolution, a socialist revolution requires a conscious, political and democratic majority.

In any case the theological world view of Thomas More was about to be extinguished by the Reformation and a series of revolutionary changes within feudal society from which a capitalist class would emerge as a dominant force described by Marx in the opening pages of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

: The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors", and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in the place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom – Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation (The Communist Manifesto in The Communist Manifesto and the Last Hundred Years, Socialist Party of Great Britain, p. 62 1948)

Engels put Socialism into perspective in his pamphlet, SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC. Engels gave a very good description of what he meant by Utopianism, short and to the point – that utopian socialism only led to a "mish-mash" of eclectic ideas. And the failures of the utopian experiments such as Robert Owen and St Simon gave force to his argument. He dismissed the usefulness of Utopian thinking with these remarks:

The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history. Then it was seen that all past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles...From that time forward, Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes — the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historical-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/ch02.htm>

Not long after More's execution for treason, in 1535, Henry VIII and his children went on to enact a series of vindictive Poor Laws. These laws gave parish authorities the right to whip, brand and hang sturdy beggars forcing them into vagrancy and theft: "when nobody will give them a job". At the time the commons were being privatised

for the purpose of sheep leading to the demolition of villages and towns. Landlords didn't want tenants at any price, only sheep.

Marx paid Thomas More the compliment for drawing attention to the enclosure of the commons by quoting a passage from UTOPIA in a footnote to the first volume of CAPITAL (Chap. 28, *Bloody Legislation against the Expropriated*, note 2. Penguin, 1990, p. 898). Marx also quoted another commentator, William Harrison, with reference to the Tudor genocide against the poor, where some “72,000 great and petty thieves were put to death” during the reign of Henry VIII.

This led Marx to write:

Thus were the agricultural folk first forcibly expropriated from the soil, driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds, and then whipped, branded and tortured by grotesquely terroristic laws into accepting the discipline necessary for the system of wage-labour (Bloody Legislation against the Expropriated, chapter 28 CAPITAL VOLUME 1, 1990, Penguin p. 899)

Perhaps More's Utopia would have provided a safer refuge for the poor than the authoritarian brutality of the Tudor Reformation? Nonetheless, Utopia offers no route to socialism. That can only come about by the conscious, political and democratic action of a world-wide socialist majority.

ASPIRING TO WHAT?

The myth of working class aspiration was forcefully put in the film Porridge, released in 1979 just as Thatcher came to power. At one point in the film, the friendly warden, Barrowclough, lectures the recidivist Fletcher for being a habitual criminal and asks why he does not aspire to become something better in the world. Fletcher tells him a story of his friend in London who wanted to aspire to be a successful businessman and be worth millions. He borrowed money to buy a wooden cart and then went around the streets of London collecting old newspapers to sell on for a profit. Twenty years later he was worth nothing and he still owed interest to the bank for the wooden cart. It is more to the point to aspire to become a socialist and aspire to get rid of capitalism.

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THE SOCIALIST POSITION ON THE EUROPEAN UNION REFERENDUM

The European Union: In Whose Interest?

“Do you think that the United Kingdom should remain a member of the European Union: Yes or no?” This is the question which will be put to the “British electorate” by the Tory government at some time in 2016. For Socialists, though, it is the wrong question for the working class to consider.

The most important question for the working class to consider is not the European Union but the ownership of the means of production and distribution. At the moment, raw resources, factories, transport and communication systems and distribution depots are all used for the purpose of making profits. This point not only applies to the countries that make up the European Union but also to the rest of world. World capitalism has at its heart the profit motive, not the meeting of human need.

Regardless of whether Britain left or stayed in the European Union, the profit system, which only enriches a minority capitalist class at the expense of the working class majority, will remain intact. Nothing changes. So the question of the ownership of the means of production and distribution and for what purpose can be put another way - capitalism or socialism?

In other words, should workers be interested in a social system that generates war, poverty, social alienation, misery and unemployment? Or should workers be interested in becoming socialists, and consciously and politically working to establish a socialist system that will serve the social needs of all humanity not just a privileged few?

There is nothing “*progressive*”, “*democratic*” or “*libertarian*” about the European Union. The EU has its trans-nationalism, its flag and its anthem. It now wants to have its own armed forces to pursue wars elsewhere in the world; it is undemocratic, it is overtly bureaucratic, and can never be run in the interest of the working class. However, the same can be said of British Capitalism and any other capitalist country in the world. To both the EU and British capitalism, socialists say a plague on both your houses.

The European Union and the working class

Will the working class be better or worse off in either by the British government staying in the European Union or by its leaving the EU? This question can be answered by an understanding of the wages system in which workers find themselves exploited and imprisoned. Whether workers are in the European Union or not they will still have to sell their ability to work to an employer. They will still be vulnerable to unemployment. And they will still be exploited by producing more social wealth than they receive in wages or salaries. The problem facing workers is the wages system not the question of EU membership.

For the capitalist class and their political agents in the various political parties of capitalism; conservative, Labour, UKIP, Liberal Democrats and Greens, there are interests involved in what the European Union is for and how it is controlled. The capitalist class live off the unearned income of rent, interest and profit and pay for their state to look after their interest. And some are worried. The EU is incrementally becoming a state in its own right, and needs financial and monetary control over the affairs of its member countries.

The potential loss of political control by individual countries – demonstrated recently in Greece and Portugal - is in effect the real worry for sections of the British capitalist class and why they want out. They want their politicians and government to control the frontier, they want to control decision making, they want to control the raising of taxation and they want control over finance and the currency. But it is not an interest shared by the working class. Workers have no country, they have no borders to protect, no state to pay for to look after their affairs and no interest in imports and exports of commodities.

Those defending the European Union claim that the EU has prevented war in Europe for over 70 years. The GUARDIAN stated “...*an imperfect EU is better than none at all...*” and went on to say that the constraining framework of the EU would leave the world “*even scarier than now*” (October 27th 2015). This is the propaganda of fear.

The European Union may have prevented wars between member states but it has not stopped member states engaging in wars elsewhere in the world for example Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and now Syria. Capitalism is a hostile and competitive environment, and the possibility of future wars between an EU state and Russia or China is not without foundation. There will be future wars in capitalism whether Britain leaves the EU or not.

Those who support Britain remaining in the European Union and those who want Britain to leave the EU have to get the support of the working class. Both sides need the support of non-socialist workers. They use arguments, all of them bogus, based on a mixture of fear and reward to gain the votes of workers.

Workers are told, for example, that 3 million jobs will be lost if Britain left the EU and 3 million jobs will be made if Britain stayed in. Who is right? These statistics are pure guesswork by paid economists on either side of the political argument to stay in or leave the European Union. But they can never give any believable guarantees about future levels of unemployment. The fact is that workers are only employed by capitalists when it is profitable to employ them. And this is largely determined by the trade cycle over which economists and politicians have no control.

Yes, the question of the European Union is not in essence an economic issue but a political one but it is a politics

which does not concern the working class. The problems of trade, sovereignty and taxation are the problems of the capitalist class and their political representatives not the workers.

Whether workers are employed within the European Union or outside of the EU, they are still an exploited class of wage slaves. Workers have no country; they have no national or European interests to pursue. The only interest workers have is to abolish capitalism and establish socialism.

The capitalist media and the politics of fear

Those opposed to the European Union will use the movement of migrant labour from different parts of Europe in order to get the working class vote through fear of job losses and lower wages. Most employers cannot use immigrant labour as a means of lowering wages but some employers do just this, cynically using low-wage workers without trade union rights and often under the control of ruthless gangmasters to force wages down, especially in “*low-skilled*” or temporary jobs. Yet what workers get as wages is determined by the state of trade, the ability of workers to organise, particularly in trade unions, and the balance of the class struggle over the intensity and extent of exploitation. The vast wealth accumulated by the capitalist class derives from the surplus value taken from workers in the production process. The capitalist class and its ownership of the means to life is the problem facing workers not migrants.

And this vast wealth is expressed in the war chest at the disposal of those capitalists campaigning for and against the European Union. The capitalists backing the yes and no campaigns have millions of pounds to pay for their propaganda. Do you think for one minute this money is being used to further the interest of the working class? Of course not, nor is the political weight of a partisan media behind both sides.

The INDEPENDENT, for example, attacks the Hedge Funds for their greed and self-interest in supporting the “*No*” vote while praising the EU for “*delivering £29 Billion for Britain*” (26th October 2015). The DAILY TELEGRAPH and the DAILY EXPRESS will send out a different message on behalf of the “*No*” vote, attacking the European Union for waste, inefficiency, red-tape, and bureaucracy. Then there will be The DAILY MAIL with its hatred towards migrants, its Little Englander nostalgia for Empire where everyone knew their place; peddling a politics of fear of anything “*European*”. The capitalist media will be awash with lies, half-truths, spin and propaganda.

Neither in nor out of the EU but world socialism

Those for or against the European Union work on the same false assumption that the market economy is indispensable, and that there is a unified national or European interest which workers and employers have in common. But there can be no common interest between labour and capital. The interest of the working class is neither for the European Union, neither for British capitalism nor for World capitalism but instead the establishment of world socialism, the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society, and a world without artificial political boundaries.

Capitalism is based on the class ownership of the means of production and distribution with its class exploitation of wage labour. As such, there is an irreconcilable conflict between the working class and the capitalist class. And this class conflict or struggle exists whether workers find themselves in the European Union or out of it. Capitalism, then, is not the answer for the workers; but socialism is.

Socialism involves the abolition of private property ownership of the means of production and distribution, along with the abolition of buying and selling and the abolition of the labour market; in fact all markets. Socialism will create a social framework informed by the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. The interest of the working class is to ignore the referendum on the EU, write “*world socialism*” in pencil across the ballot paper, and join with other socialists to replace commodity production and exchange for profit with production and distribution for social use.

CHAOS AND CALIPHATE

Patrick Cockburn, the Independent's Middle East correspondent has just published a book on the wars and chaos in the Middle East since the end of the First Gulf War. The book is not a happy read. Here is one passage which highlights the misery millions men and women have and are living in the world today. *"It is probably the most dangerous way to make a living in the world. "I do it because I would prefer to die than see the rest of my family starve," says Sabir Saleh, a middle-aged man who used to be a farmer but is now too poor to hire a tractor to plough his land. Every morning he goes out into the minefield laid around Penjwin, a Kurdish village in Northern Iraq shattered by fighting in the Iran-Iraq War. Saleh looks for one mine in particular: the Italian-made Valmara, one of the most lethal anti-personnel mines in existence. It is not easy to spot, because its five khaki-coloured prongs look like dried grass. Pressure on any one of them causes the Valmara to jump to waist height and explode, spraying 1,200 ball bearings over a range of 100 yards.*

"I defuse the mine with a piece of wire," says Saleh. "Then I unscrew the top of it and take out the aluminium around the explosives. When I have taken apart six mines I have enough aluminium to sell for 30 dinar (about 75 pence) to a shop in Penjwin". After a day in the minefields he hopes to have recovered enough aluminium to feed his family of eight" (CHAOS AND THE CALIPHATE, Patrick Cockburn, Chapter 3, p. 45, OR Books 2016).

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SOCIALISM: RUSSIA AND LENIN

Abacus has just published a selection of writings "FRACTURED TIMES: ULTURE AND SOCIETY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY" by the late Eric Hobsbawm who spent his adult life defending the Bolsheviks coup-d'etat in 1917. The first chapter is headed "*Manifestos*", in which he looks at the political and artistic manifestos of the 20th century and finds them wanting. Predictably, Hobsbawm does not mention the Socialist Party of Great Britain's manifesto published in 1905 even though he knew of the Party.

Hobsbawm ends his article with a passing shot at the working class with the remark that "*workers of the world unite*" is a phrase "*well past its sell-by-date*" (p.5). He died a bitter man. Everything he worked for all his political life came to nothing. His vision of the future at the end of the article is a dystopian world of incoherence, crises, war and misery; "*fractured times*", he calls it. There is no optimism just political pain and suffering. No human agency exists to end capitalism. The workers, for Hobsbawm are just like the yahoos in Gulliver's Travels, content to live out their lives in filth and ignorance.

Not so Marx and socialists who came after him. Marx was quite clear on the centrality of the working class to make history, become a class "*for itself*" and establish Socialism. Marx said:

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class (COMMUNIST MANIFESTO from *The Communist Manifesto in the Last Hundred Years*, Socialist Party of Great Britain 1948, p. 70)

And he went on to say;

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority p. 71

Hobsbawm's political bitterness is shared by many intellectuals who saw in the "*Russian experiment*" an alternative to the capitalism of the West. They were wrong as the SPGB told them at the time. Repudiating the claim that the Bolsheviks had established socialism in Russia, the SOCIALIST STANDARD in August 1918 wrote:

Unless a mental revolution such as the world has never seen before has taken place or an economic change has occurred more rapidly than history has ever recorded, the answer is "No!"

Russia became just another capitalist state with an exploited working class and a class struggle as pervasive as found elsewhere in the world.

1991 not only saw the final nail in the state capitalist coffin of the Soviet Empire but it also witnessed the utter discrediting of Leninism and its author Vladimir Lenin. Although, in fact, Lenin's leadership and impact on the Russian Revolution is not as great as his supporters, then and now, believe.

Lenin's role in the Russian revolution was surely exaggerated both by himself and by his followers. But a closer look at what was actually happening in Russia in the months leading up to the November 1917 revolution shows that Lenin actually played only a relatively minor role. He was far from being the '*Great Man*' his followers, including Professor Hobsbawm, claimed.

In late autumn/winter of 1916 Lenin was in Switzerland and in the autumn/winter 1916 he made a famous speech declaring that the Russian workers were too backward for the revolution to start there. In spring 1917 - after the February 1917 revolution when the Bolsheviks were the last to know of what was happening and also he did a deal with the Germans, and got himself and his entourage onto a train for Petersburg. His speech on arrival - known as the '*April Theses*' - leaned so far towards direct action/anarchism, that he nearly split the local party. During the summer he shilly-shallied over what to do (see various articles and speeches, sometimes arguing for a peace, sometimes declaring the Bolsheviks would defend Russia). He tried a coup in August but this failed and he had to flee over the border to Finland.

When he returned in the autumn, he had some trouble persuading his followers - who seem to have lost some confidence in the '*great man's*' judgement, given his track record - to decide for a revolution. But by then the real revolution had already started, in the summer, without the '*leadership*' of this tiny band of Bolsheviks: soldiers voting with their feet were walking away from the war to help at home with the harvest, and peasants in many parts of the country were seizing landowners' mansions - these were unprotected as the army was all away fighting the war.

The Bolshevik '*vanguard*' even then was unable to do much and had to rely on the peasants' party, the Left Social Revolutionaries, so adopted as their slogan "*Peace! Land! Bread!*". Land was the key demand of the peasants and the Left Socialist revolutionaries, and would be incompatible with a demand for socialism: - common ownership and private ownership cannot co-exist. Peace was the demand of the soldiers and was also essential due to the collapse of Russia's economy. Bread was the demand of the February revolution which had been triggered by the decree of yet another cut in rations; it was led by protesting women in the cities, which were close to starvation, and not by any Bolshevik '*vanguard*'.

Lenin's failure to achieve a Socialist revolution was entirely predictable. First as he himself argued, before leaving his exile in Switzerland, the Russian workers were politically and socially backward and would have to wait for the revolution to start in Western Europe, led by German, French and British workers. While in Russia conditions on the land did vary considerably, with the communal mir still dominant in many regions, there was actually a growing amount of wage-labour and capitalist production: for instance, in the oil production of the Black Sea; in the large-scale sugar-beet plantations and sugar refineries of western Ukraine; in the Faberge and fashion workshops of Petersburg, and so on.

Through the 19th century, many '*progressive*' landowners had tried to bring in '*improvements*' on their estates, and this trend received a boost after the abolition of serfdom. Without serfs, landowners floundered economically unless they could modernise. That meant changing so as to adopt the European model of exploitation - capitalism and wage-labour.

But the nature of the 1917 revolution was also because of Lenin's top-down, elitist, vanguardist organisation. Policy was decided by the leader and a tight circle of his '*General Staff*' with instructions being passed down the '*chain of command*' via party activists to the unconscious "masses", who depended on proper leadership to tell them when and where they should start a revolution. This vanguardist system of organisation was not unique to Lenin's party. The German SPD also followed it. So too did the earlier Russian revolutionaries, Tkachev and Nechayev.

This vanguard theory of revolution went counter to Marx's argument that the revolution must be a class struggle. Both Marx and Engels were against any idea of the revolution being organised by a leader or leadership group. They argued for the working class to develop class consciousness, an understanding of how they are exploited through the wages system, and an understanding of where their class interests lie. A Socialist revolution has to be a bottom-up, democratic movement, not a top-down conspiratorial coup.

Vanguardism is the reason the Socialist Party of Great Britain has consistently opposed the Bolsheviks and all those who think like them. We have confidence that the working class - who are capable of running capitalism - are also capable of recognising their class interests and acting to end this system of exploitation, and replacing it with socialism.

“Workers of the world unite”! A call that is still a living call to socialist revolution. Despite the cynics and the pessimists you have a world to win. A world that is free from the leaders and the led; free from intellectuals who want to do the thinking for you; and free from the exploitive wages system which can offer you only poverty, inequality and slavery.

RUSSIA: A RETROSPECTIVE

Below we publish a pamphlet written in 1991 by the reconstituted Socialist Party of Great Britain as Russian state capitalism under the dictatorship of the Bolsheviks gave way to the Wild West Capitalism of Boris Yeltsin's Presidency and the gangster capitalism of Vladimir Putin's dictatorship. For the working class in Russia after 1991 nothing fundamentally changed at all. One exploitive ruling class just replaced another. Workers still needed to organise consciously and politically for a world free from capital, the wages system and a repressive capitalist state.

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THE TURMOIL IN RUSSIA - WHERE WE STAND

Russia, the so-called Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, is in turmoil. Its Empire is breaking-up as several of the constituent republics seek independence. Failing to retain the backing of united armed forces, the leaders of the Russian Communist Party are losing their dictatorial grip on power, and spokesmen of other political groups struggle for leadership in the new democratically elected *“Parliament”*.

The upsurge of revolt against the old leaders had been largely the outcome of gross inefficiency of transport and industry under the Russian system of nationalisation. It has nothing to do with Socialism Nationalisation in Russia, as in Britain, is state capitalism. The economic backwardness of Russia in the backwardness of Russian state capitalism, in comparison with the capitalism of Western Europe, the U.S.A., Japan and so on. So the new rulers of Russia declare their intention of copying more or less closely the Western pattern of *“private enterprise capitalism”* with relatively little nationalisation, as in British industry following the privatisation measures of the Thatcher government.

The version given to us by British politicians and the media is that it is the failure of *“Communism”*; the monumental falsehood that there has been a Communist social system in Russia for the past three-quarters of a century since Lenin and his followers, backed by armed force, seized power in 1917.

The basic essential of capitalism is the ownership of the means of production and distribution by the capitalist class (or by the government on their behalf), wealth being produced by the non-owning working class. Backed by state power the capitalists, though themselves non-producers of wealth, are able to extract, in the form of profit, interest and rent of land, part of what is produced by the wage and salary earners. Capitalism is a commodity producing system; that is to say all the goods produced are sold in the market. The worker's labour-power also takes on the form of a commodity, wages being the price of labour-power.

In socialist society (for the Socialist Party of Great Britain, Communism and Socialism are the same) there will be no

owning class and working class; no rent, interest and profit; and no wages or salaries. Goods will be produced not for sale but solely and directly for consumption. As it was put by Marx and Engels in the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO (1848), it involves “*the abolition of buying and selling*”. No one can seriously claim that this has been the system in Russia.

It remains to state the attitude of the Socialist Party of Great Britain to past and present happenings in Russia. We have nothing to withdraw or apologise for. We did not at the beginning suppose that it was possible for that semi-feudal country, with its largely peasant population, to be ready for socialism. An article – THE REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA - WHERE IT FAILS, published in The SOCIALIST STANDARD in August 1918 contained this statement:

What justification is there, then, for terming the upheaval in Russia a Socialist revolution? None whatever beyond the fact that the leaders in the November movement claim to be Marxian Socialists.

We showed also that they had no backing in the writings of Marx for their claims. Over the years we consistently disputed their claim to be able by means of dictatorship, repression and censorship to impose socialism on a population overwhelmingly opposed to it.

What of the future? Assuming that Russia goes over to a “*democratic*” political system similar to that of the Western countries; does this entail the ending of the class struggle between capitalists and workers? By no means. The class struggle will continue as it has in the rest of the “*democratic*” world.

Whatever may be the political complexion of governments elected in Russia they will invariably come into conflict with the working class. Capitalism cannot be run in any other way than by resisting the efforts of the workers to raise their wages at the expense of profits. Nor can governments prevent periodic depression with high unemployment.

We, therefore, do not congratulate the Russian workers on their new found enthusiasm for “*democratic*” capitalist political parties. What is urgently needed, in Russia as in Britain and in every other country in the world, is Socialist political parties having the replacement of capitalism by socialism as their sole objective.

In July 1917, the SOCIALIST STANDARD contained this declaration:-

we of the Socialist party of Great Britain make it plain that we are not prepared to congratulate the Russian peasant upon assisting the Russian capitalist class to a more complete dominance.

Now that the peasants have largely become factory workers, we call on them to form Socialist parties. We are not prepared to congratulate workers on supporting the political parties aiming to modernize Russian capitalism.

THE DANGERS OF RACISM

The root cause of modern race-prejudice is the capitalist system of society; a society of competition and struggle; struggle between worker and worker. For the working-class, who constitutes the overwhelming majority of its population, it is a society of poverty and insecurity; to most of them it offers not the slightest chance of escape from a lifetime of constant heart-breaking effort to earn a living. For the working-class, it is a society that breeds war and strife, in which their masters, on whose behalf they fight, use every device to stimulate antagonism and hatred between them.

From the cradle to the grave, they are subjected to a mass of propaganda which deadens their minds, works on their prejudices, and endeavours by every means possible to turn their thoughts away from the real cause of their troubles. They are the tools of political leaders and demagogues who make them promises which they do not keep. Disappointed, they exchange one set of political leaders for another, whose promises are no more fulfilled than the promises of those before them. They become disillusioned, bitter, and cynical; fair game for dictators and “strong men” who promise to lead them to a “promised land”, but instead lead them into greater disasters and misfortunes.

All the time they are experiencing unemployment, poverty, insecurity, competition for jobs, struggle to “rise up the

ladder". They seek to escape from the harsh world of reality in dreams and games of make-believe, in football pools and cinemas, but only for brief moments, for capitalism soon brings them back to things as they are, and not as they would wish them to be. They still have to contend with poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and war. For the working class, capitalism is a society of mental, social, and economic frustration; as such it breeds race-prejudice as a swamp breeds pestilence.

To the extent that socialist ideas permeate the minds of the working-class wherever they may be, to the extent that workers realise that their interests are in common, irrespective of race, and opposed to the interests of the capitalist class, irrespective of their race, to that extent they will become proof against race prejudice and will work together for the establishment of socialism which will end, once and for all, the problem of race prejudice. From SPGB Pamphlet "THE RACIAL PROBLEM A SOCIALIST ANALYSIS (1947)

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WHICH WAY RUSSIAN CAPITALISM?

Throughout the Twentieth Century, the Socialist Party of Great Britain has studied Russian capitalism. We have not studied Russian capitalism as academics and nor do we particularly care about the problems facing Russian capitalism any more than we care about the problems facing British capitalism. The ruling class of any one country pays politicians, professors and journalists for this purpose.

However, we are students of Marx and we have inherited from Marx the scientific study of how and why capitalism works; the social laws which act upon it; and its historical genesis and termination within human history.

This is in contrast to the sterile and ahistorical obsessions of bourgeois or vulgar economics with its myth about the autonomous individual and how their insatiable demand outstrips supply, or with the merits or otherwise between private and state capitalism. Instead of being concerned about prices; of market fluctuations or with buying and selling, our Marxian approach studies how different social groups relate to the means of production in different ways. As Engels put it:

Economics deals not only with things but with relations between persons and in the last resort, between classes; there relations... are, always attached to things and appear as things (F. Engels, "Review of Marx's Critique of Political Economy", 1859)

Some groups in society may have direct access to the means of production. Others will have only indirect access to them. Workers, for example, have to sell their mental and physical powers; their labour power, before they can work alongside the means of production. Some may have no access to them at all (the unemployed).

Those who do exercise ownership and control over the means of production and distribution have authority over those who do not. Social power stems from the way in which different classes do or do not control the means for making a living. This is why socialists see class as the basic constituent of society, not gender or race. Class accords to how a particular social group relates to the means of production and distribution. This is why Marx and Engels wrote in the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles

This means that the class struggle is the focus of attention for socialists as it was for Marx and Engels. The class struggle takes place between workers who are forced to sell their mental and physical abilities for a wage or for a salary and a capitalist class who own the means of production and distribution.; mineral resources, factories, communication systems and distribution points and so on, a class who only engage in production if a profit is to be made. Capitalists constantly strive to expand capital irrespective of whether or not human needs are being satisfied. The capitalists cannot be blamed for this process. They are, what Marx called, "*a personification of capital*" just as workers are a personification of alienated labour within the production process.

This understanding of capitalism was known to the Socialist Party of Great Britain from its formation in 1904. So, consequently, when socialists came to study Russia in 1917, from the coup d'état by Lenin and the Bolsheviks onwards, it was primarily to assess the claims being made at the time of whether Russia was “*socialist*” and the Bolsheviks “*Marxists*”. We concluded that Russia was not socialist but an emerging capitalist state and far from being Marxists, the Bolsheviks drew their political heritage from the policies of Bismarck’s nationalisation and reform programmes and from the conspiratorial tactics of Blanqui and his followers.

Our analysis of Russia at the time showed that conditions for socialism were not yet ripe; the working class were poorly developed, and socialist knowledge was severely lacking. Through the imposition of a dictatorship by a group of determined intellectuals how could the Bolsheviks be described as Marxists? With the existence of the wages system, the coercive machinery of government, commodity production and trade by Russian companies on the world market, how could Russia be describe as anything but capitalist?

A more important consideration for socialists was the existence of the class struggle in Russia between workers and state employers. Russia’s new ruling class tried to extract as much surplus value out of the workforce as possible with the workers resisting as best they could. As the Russian joke went; “*They pretend to pay us and we pretend to work*”.

Neither was the SPGB ever taken in by the claims made by the Russian state and its supporters for the success of the Five Year Plans. State administration by bureaucrats of commodity production and socialist production and distribution for social use under common ownership and democratic control are not the same thing. Our Marxian analysis of Russia could never describe the country as socialist.

What of Russia’s future? In the 1934 SPGB pamphlet, “*Questions of the Day*”, a whole chapter was devoted to Russian capitalism and the Bolsheviks. The last section in the article, entitled “*What of the future*”, argued that a socialist movement will grow in Russia but it will derive from the working class and not from the Russian dictatorship. Capitalist revolutions have a tendency to work themselves out as time goes by. Clearly this was the case in Russia where, by the late 1920’s, Stalin had consolidated power into his own hands in a similar manner to Napoleon in France after the French Revolution.

History shows that revolutionaries at the beginning; usually students, philosophy professors, romantic poets and playwrights, are followed by more and more reactionary successors, usually lawyers, bureaucrats and accountants. In a concluding remark the pamphlet had this to say about the Bolsheviks:

Neither in their views on the gaining of power, nor in their belief – now rapidly losing the hold it first gained abroad – about the possibility of imposing socialism by dictatorship, have the Bolsheviks added anything to the knowledge possessed by Marx

Marx stressed that socialism could only ever be established by the working class taking conscious political action. The Bolsheviks rejected this. However, the Bolshevik attempt to change society through dictatorship has been a total failure. As the Socialist Party of Great Britain prophetically remarked:

In due course of time that failure will become obvious to the workers inside and outside of Russia

Indeed this has been the case. However, in its failure the Russian dictatorship has polluted the word “*socialism*” and not only distorted Marx but aligned him to their regime. They have done damage to the propagation of socialist ideas than any free market evangelist from the Adam Smith Institute. Russian state capitalism has made the work of socialists that much harder. We have to spend time arguing what socialism is not. We also have to spend time demonstrating why socialism has not collapsed or why the theories of Marx have not been refuted by experience.

Neither communism nor socialism, as understood by Marx, Engels and ourselves, has ever failed or collapsed. Socialism or communism (they both mean the same thing) has not yet been established anywhere in the world. There has not yet existed a society in which buying and selling has been replaced by producing goods solely and directly for human consumption. Nowhere in the world has the social potential within the productive forces been freed from

the impediment imposed upon it by capital.

As for Marx, well, his analysis of capitalism still holds true. After all, it was the Marxist study of Russia in 1917 which designated it capitalist. It was the theoretical power of the Material Conception of History which allowed socialists to formulate the correct analysis of Russian society and determine its future course (see our leaflet “*The Turmoil in Russia – Where We Stand*”).

So, what can workers in Russia do about the circumstances in which they now find themselves? They could no worse than open Volume I of Capital in which Marx wrote as follows:

One nation can and should learn from others. And even when a society has got on the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement...it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen its birth pangs (CAPITAL, VOL. 1 L&W, p. 20)

Just as one nation can learn from another, so workers from one geographically region of the world can also learn from other workers. Workers in Russia could learn from class conscious workers in this country. That is; to learn from workers who make up the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

This means pursuing the class struggle as a political struggle by class conscious workers understanding and desiring socialism. This political action will have to take place in a socialist party having a set of coherent political principles; a practical political programme for establishing socialism and a clearly defined socialist objective. Such an organisation will be without leaders and the led.

Workers in Russia have just made history for another class. At some stage in the future they will have to make history for themselves.

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THE SPGB AND REFORMS

It should be remembered that the main difficulty confronting the socialist is not due to the conditions under which they operate, but in getting across socialist ideas to a non-receptive working class. In Britain and America, where there is the franchise with little restriction on socialist meetings and publication of literature, socialists still face an enormous task. The forms of government are of minor concern to socialists as indeed they are to the vast bulk of the working class who are more interested in jobs, wages and prices than in politics. The struggle to make capitalism more democratic with so-called political reforms is non-socialist and reformist and cannot be supported by socialists as it deflects effort away from our objective – socialism. (The SPGB and Reforms, SOCIALIST STUDIES 22 p. 20)

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Object and Declaration of Principles

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (ie land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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